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Returned to Kennedy Stearman 9-10

OUTSIDE THE SYSTEM

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SECRET/SENSITIVE

August 31, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. KISSINGER

FROM: RICHARD T. KENNEDY
WILLIAM L. STEARMAN

SUBJECT: CIA Action Proposals for Cambodia

Bill Colby sends you suggested measures to be taken in Cambodia if the GKR weathers the next few weeks of military action. (Tab A). After this period prospects for the survival of the GKR will be good enough to consider additional remedial action. The paper, summarized below, suggests such action.

The Problem

-- The Khmer Communists may now be undertaking the military offensive to destroy the GKR as a functioning entity. Our mission in Phnom Penh -- and Sir Robert Thompson -- believe the Communists will not succeed. CIA gives the Communists a fifty-fifty chance.

-- The GKR's problems are not rooted in lack of resources, but in ineptitude resulting from poor leadership and the lack of coherent programs.

-- Should the GKR check or stalemate the Khmer Insurgents in the months ahead, Vietnamese Communists might still tip the scales militarily. This could rekindle Khmer nationalism and hatred for Vietnamese invaders, which would make a political settlement more attractive to Hanoi.

Proposed Measures -- to be taken over the next two or three months -- to improve the effectiveness of the GKR in prosecuting the war:

-- Declaration of Martial Law by the GKR with real penalities for crimes (hoarding, taking bribes, deserting, etc.) impeding the war effort. Steps should also be taken to render military officers, even at the highest level, subject to military discipline.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

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-- An "Arm the People" program to be started in the Phnom Penh area -- and later extended -- so the people will feel they are participating in collective defense. The U.S. would have to provide weapons.

-- A "Pay the Troops program. Late or no pay to Cambodian troops has greatly hurt FANK morale.

-- A top-level advisor to the GKR. Lon Nol asked President Nixon, on August 6, for such an advisor. He would help surface effective leadership in the GKR and coordinate the type of internal GKR political, military and propaganda programs the situation now requires.

-- Expand present efforts to exploit the enemy's weaknesses. All fire fights and frictions between the KI and Vietnamese Communists must be systematically publicized by all available media. (CIA is already broadcasting one black and two gray radio programs in Khmer and Vietnamese languages designed to cause such friction.) Additional suggested proposals are:

. Exploit Khmer fears of Vietnamese expansionism by: (a) surfacing "captured" NVN directives providing for the creation of NVN-controlled regions in Cambodia; (b) fabricating documents of KI complaints of inadequate deliveries of munitions from the NVA/VC.

. Exploit KI doubts about Sihanouk by surfacing fabricated messages showing he is prepared to double-cross the communists.

Our comments on Colby's proposals follow:

-- This paper is dated and needs to be made current.

-- Ongoing psywar activity to exploit friction between the KI and Vietnamese Communists should be intensified. Also, CIA should exploit available intelligence and, if necessary, fabricate documents toward this end. We do not recommend such operations involving Sihanouk since our involvement would be assumed.

-- The GKR penalizing for crimes and enforcing military discipline in the officer corps is sound, but we question that the GKR can effectively enforce full martial law. Our emphasis should be pressing the GKR to effect reforms and tighten controls -- with perhaps limited martial law.

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

SECRET/SENSITIVE

-- The "Arm the People" program would probably accomplish little and run the risk of losing weapons to the enemy. The GKR should concentrate on inducting more soldiers into FANK. As an alternative means to engage the populace in the war effort, we should explore social mobilization programs that would involve Cambodian civilians in medical, school rebuilding, and other such endeavors.

At Tab B is a memorandum from you to Colby requesting that he continue and intensify present CIA psywar efforts to exploit splits between the KI and the Vietnamese Communists and to undertake new operations toward this goal but none specifically directed against Sihanouk. The memorandum also asks Colby to refine and make more specific other measures proposed in his paper and circulate the results as a WSAG paper to its principals.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the memorandum at Tab B.

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Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

28 August 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

SUBJECT : Action Proposals for Cambodia

1. Attached for your information is a memorandum containing a series of measures suggested for implementation in Cambodia, if the GKR proves able to weather the next two or three weeks of military action. (If the GKR survives until roughly 10 September, the rains are likely to give it a respite until October or November.)

2. This memorandum has been prepared wholly within the Central Intelligence Agency, and has not been coordinated elsewhere within the government.

Bill

W. E. Colby

Attachment

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

28 August 1973

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Action Proposals for Cambodia

I. The Problem

1. The Khmer Communists may now be starting the military offensive which they hope will destroy the Cambodian government (the GKR) as a functioning entity. If they succeed, further discussion of measures to improve the viability of the GKR as it is presently constituted will be academic. The considered judgment of all components of the U.S. Mission in Phnom Penh, however -- and also the judgment of Sir Robert Thompson -- is that they will not succeed, at least in the next several weeks. The judgment of the Central Intelligence Agency's analysts in Washington is less sanguine than that of the U.S. Mission and of Sir Robert, but we do give the GKR a fifty-fifty chance of surviving the military campaign of the next few weeks.

2. If the GKR can weather the next two to three weeks its prospects will be enhanced enough to make consideration of additional remedial actions worthwhile. The GKR's problems are rooted not in a lack of resources but in its own ineptitude. This ineptitude in turn is a result of poor leadership, poor morale, administrative inefficiency, and the lack of any kind of coherent or realistic political program. While a continuation of military and economic aid to Cambodia is clearly necessary, it will not solve any of these problems. Given the existing constraints on U.S. policy, it may be impossible to reverse the downward slide of the GKR. If the GKR gets through the next several weeks, however, the rainy season may provide a respite during which we can try to reverse the present downward trend.

CLASSIFIED BY [redacted] (b)(1) (b)(3)
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Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

At that point it should be clearly understood that additional aid for Phnom Penh will be less important than efforts to create a situation in which the GKR can and will employ its present resources effectively enough to preclude a military victory by its indigenous opponents.

3. It may be argued that even if the GKR should prove able to check or stalemate the Khmer insurgents, Vietnamese Communist regulars could re-enter the fray and provide the necessary force to tip the military balance. Politically and psychologically, however, this would create difficulties which the Communists do not now face. Hatred of the Vietnamese is an emotion both strong and widespread in Cambodia. In its halcyon early days of spring and summer 1970, the GKR was sustained and supported by a genuinely spontaneous welling of nationalist sentiment -- a sentiment it subsequently squandered. The factor of "Vietnamese imperialist aggression" is now largely dormant because the Communists' battles are being fought by Cambodians. It could be quickly rekindled, however, if Vietnamese troops were re-introduced into combat. Thus if the GKR could hold its Cambodian adversaries at bay, a negotiated settlement could well become more attractive to Hanoi -- as well as to the Khmer Communists and Sihanouk -- than an image-spoiling employment of Vietnamese troops.

II. Proposed Measures

4. Suggested below are five measures which could be implemented quickly and which might -- over the next two or three months -- markedly improve the effectiveness of the GKR's military forces, strengthen the popular support of the GKR, and encourage the already existing divisive tendencies within the Khmer insurgents and between the insurgents and the Vietnamese Communists.*

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Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

(a) Martial Law

The government should declare martial law, with real penalties for crimes which impede the war effort. Hoarders, bribe takers (at all levels), deserters, etc. should be subject to immediate trial by military tribunal. It should be publicly announced that military commanders must remain with their units in the field unless summoned or specifically authorized to come to Phnom Penh. Severe penalties should be imposed in the event of infractions. In this and every other sense, officers -- no matter how senior -- should be subject to military discipline as fully as any common soldier.

(b) An "Arm the People" Program

The GKR should enlist and engage its people in their own defense by adopting a Cambodian variant of the South Vietnamese government's People's Self Defense Forces (PSDF). This would involve arming those elements of the population not in the regular armed forces with small arms -- giving them the means to help defend themselves against the Communists. Such a program could be started immediately in the Phnom Penh area and then extended to other areas under government control. The U.S. would have to provide the weapons. The people should be given a sense of participation in a collective national effort and grounds for believing that their efforts can make a difference.

(c) Pay the Troops

Too many Cambodian Army troops do not receive their pay on time, or never receive the full pay to

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

which they are entitled. Many reports have indicated that failure to receive full pay -- or any pay at all -- is probably the single most important factor in the poor morale of FANK troops. A special inspection corps, perhaps with U.S. military officers as observers, should physically carry the pay to the major FANK units in the Phnom Penh area, and remain with each unit until the pay is distributed.

(d) Exploit the Enemy's Weaknesses

The GKR (and also the U.S.) should expand their psywar efforts to compound the problems and exploit the vulnerabilities of the Khmer Communists.

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

(e) A Top-Level Advisor for the GKR

To survive, the GKR will have to provide its own leadership -- all we can perform is the midwife function of helping that leadership surface. But

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

if the GKR is to improve and integrate its military, political and progaganda performance in a many faceted struggle with the Communists, it will probably need a top level advisor to help explain and orchestrate the kind of interrelated programs the situation requires. Lon Nol has asked for such an advisor in his 6 August letter to President Nixon. An individual of the caliber of the late John Vann is what is needed in Phnom Penh.

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

We would recommend that an immediate search be made for an American official with the requisite abilities. Brig. Gen. Thomas Bowen or Colonel Ladd might be possible candidates. Whoever was chosen would have to be given wide-ranging personal authority to deal with all of the top Cambodian leaders, under the overall guidance of the Ambassador.

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

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Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

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Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

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Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM FOR

Mr. William E. Colby

SUBJECT: Action Proposals for Cambodia

Your paper concerning actions we might take in Cambodia has been read with interest. It has stimulated some further ideas which are included below.

Present efforts and programs to exploit frictions between the KI and Vietnamese Communists should be continued and intensified. (b)(1) (b)(3)

As you suggest, the GKR should do all it can to: (a) impose penalities for crimes impeding the war effort; and (b) render officers, even at the highest level, subject to military discipline. However, it is doubtful whether the GKR could actually enforce martial law. Means for achieving these goals short of full martial law should be explored further.

It is important that the GKR engage the populace in the war effort, but we feel the "arm the people" approach suggested would not accomplish enough in a positive way to offset the risk of losing weapons to the enemy. Highest priority should go to conscription which now only affects the 31-35 age group. We should explore the possibility of the GKR engaging the populace in the war effort by social mobilization programs such as refugee relief, school rebuilding, and bandage rolling. Organizations of Bhuddists, students, merchants, etc. could be involved in these useful and peaceful efforts.

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Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790

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Troop pay now appears to be less of a problem than it has been, but proposals you may develop on specific initiatives we might take in this direction will be welcome.

In order to consider further the proposals in your paper, it would be appreciated if you would submit them in a WSAG paper -- consulting other departments as appropriate -- and circulate it to the WSAG principals, hopefully by September 12.

Henry A. Kissinger

Approved for Release: 2019/07/22 C05504790